

(Early Anabaptism) Foundation Stones in the Anabaptist Faith

by Denny Kenaston

The sermon emphasizes the importance of Jesus Christ Himself as the foundation stone of the Anabaptist faith and the need for obedience to His commandments and following His example in order to live like Him.

Duration: 1:18:26

Scripture: Joel 2:13, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 28:19-20, Romans 1:16, Romans 10:14-15, James 1:22, James 4:17

Topics: "Anabaptism"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of evangelism and spreading the word of God. He shares the example of Medo Simon's dedication to preaching the gospel in various circumstances, even in the face of persecution. The preacher calls for repentance and a turning away from worldly pleasures, urging the audience to recognize the seriousness of the message being delivered. He expresses a desire for the restoration of primitive Christianity in the present day and highlights the contrast between the early Christians' willingness to separate from the world and the current tendency to embrace worldly pleasures.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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Father, we thank you this evening that it speaketh better things than that of Abel. Thank you, Lord, this evening that there's blood on the mercy seat. Hallelujah! Blood sprinkled on the mercy seat.

Lord, we come, because of that blood, we come boldly before the throne of grace this evening to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need, Lord. Here we are this evening in time of need. We're in need, Lord.

We need to hear. We're in need, Lord. I need to speak, God.

I need to say some things that You want me to say tonight, Father. Oh, Father, I come. I'm in need tonight, Lord.

Please help me, Father. I want to say the right things, Lord. I want to say them the right way.

Please help me tonight, Father. I know they need to be said, dear God. Please help me to say them the right way, Lord.

I acknowledge that I can mess it up sometimes, God. Please help me. Give us ears to hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the Anabaptist people.

In Jesus Christ's name I ask it. Amen. You may be seated.

Well, what a blessing to look out over your faces again this evening and see the hunger. You know, there are a lot of other things you could be doing this evening. Good things.

A lot of other good things. So, we rejoice in the hunger that we sense. I do rejoice in the prayer meetings and the beautiful things that God is doing.

You know, you can tell a lot what's happening out here by watching the prayer meeting. You can do that in a church, too, by the way. You can tell a lot by what's going on in the prayer meeting.

So, we're rejoicing in that this evening. Well, I want to continue on with this series on Christ in the early Anabaptists. The more I study, the more I read, the more I am confirmed in my heart that if you go back there to the beginning and you see what those brothers and sisters were doing back there, there's no question about it.

It wasn't any new idealism. It wasn't some new idea, some new way to live. It was Christ living out His life in a bunch of brothers and sisters who yielded their lives to Him.

This evening, I want to speak on this subject. Foundation stones in the Anabaptist faith. I'm going to go a little deeper this evening.

Foundation stones in the Anabaptist faith. My heart and mind has been greatly moved by the picture that God has been painting for us in the last few evenings. Such a glorious picture.

Such a beautiful people. Such a pure and a simple humility in their hearts and in their lives. It just thrills my soul to look upon them, to look back, to go back almost 500 years and see the beauty of the Lord upon these Anabaptist people.

Truly, these people were Zion, the perfection of beauty. Truly, God did shine out from them 500 years ago. I was thinking about Brother Raymond's message last evening about evangelism.

And we're going to say a bit more about that this evening along with some other things. But, it's such a burden in my heart that somehow by God's grace, we, in these last days, because we are in the last days,

brothers and sisters, somehow by God's grace, we, in these last days, can restore primitive Christianity. I know it's the heart of God.

I know God's going to do it. It's not a question of whether it's going to happen. It's a question of who's going to do it.

I believe that with all of my heart. And we who live in the last of the last days, we may have the most blessed opportunity of those who have many, many years gone by. We may have that opportunity.

I wonder if we have the courage to take the opportunity and restore primitive Christianity to the church again. What do we do with all these facts, brothers and sisters? Some of us men were discussing these things last evening a bit. You know, it's kind of like, Okay, Lord.

You're right. You're right. But, what shall we do? We must be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

Amen? May God deliver us from the plague of American Christianity. And we run closer to that than we realize. The plague of American Christianity says, I have heard a good and a sound sermon, therefore I am spiritual.

We have deceived ourselves into thinking that I have heard a good sermon and therefore I am spiritual. I have heard a good sermon and I even said amen to it and therefore I am spiritual. But that's not what the Bible teaches.

The Bible teaches I have heard a good sermon and I have responded obediently to it and therefore I am spiritual. And there's a big gap between the two of those. Multitudes, multitudes of people sit Sunday by Sunday and hear good sermons and do nothing about it.

May God deliver us from the plague of American Christianity. Brothers and sisters, we live in America too. These things that we've been hearing demand a response.

And the response is repentance. The kind that we heard about on Monday night, a turning from and a turning to, is what God is calling us to. Oh, brothers and sisters, do you realize that this is not just a meeting? This is not just another tent meeting and we've gathered together and it's a nice summer evening in July 2008 and we went to hear another sermon in a tent.

It's more than that, brothers and sisters. God is speaking more deeply than that, at least to some of our hearts. My prayer continually is, Lord, we have failed.

We have failed terribly. Forgive us, Lord. But also, my prayer is continually, Oh, Lord, would You give us another chance, please? Would You give us another chance? May God grant us a chance like this to be faithful in the days ahead.

I'm telling you, this is not just another meeting. It's not. This evening I want to focus on some of the basic foundational beliefs of the early Anabaptists.

I'd like to read a few verses if you'll turn with me to Ephesians, first of all. Ephesians 2. Since we're going to talk about foundations, I thought it would be fitting for us to read a couple of verses in the New Testament about foundations, so we get a good and a clear idea what kind of foundations we're talking about. Paul, in the book of Ephesians in chapter 2, said these words in v. 19-21, Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners.

Hallelujah! But, fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. Think about it, brothers and sisters. We are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.

We've come to Mount Zion. Amen? And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom in Christ all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. Isn't that a beautiful picture? Groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.

A holy dwelling place for the Lord. That's where God is going. That's what God wants.

He wants a dwelling place in His people. But I want us to notice here that Paul says that this is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Amen? Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

Jesus Christ Himself. Note those words. It's not the doctrine of Jesus Christ here.

It's Jesus Christ Himself. It's not the name Jesus Christ. It's the person of Jesus Christ who is the chief cornerstone of this building that we are building, this glorious, beautiful habitation of God through the Spirit.

Jesus Christ Himself, the person of Jesus Christ, is the chief cornerstone. I wonder how many of them can grasp the reality of that and get a hold of what that means. Oh, us Americans, oh, we are theologically right.

We've got all our theologies right, but is Jesus Christ Himself the chief cornerstone? In our own personal theology and reality, Paul said it this way also in 1 Corinthians 3, reading one of Menno Simon's favorite verses. 1 Corinthians 3, verse 9, and following to 11, for we are laborers, Paul said, laborers together with God. Wow! Look at that! We are laborers together with God.

That's what Paul said. Ye are God's husbandry. Ye are God's building.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, Paul giving his own testimony, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. Why, Paul? For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ.

May I say it again? He's not talking about the doctrine of Jesus Christ. He's not talking just about the name of Jesus Christ. He's talking about the Person of Jesus Christ.

That is the foundation upon which we are to build our lives and the foundation upon which we are to build the lives of those around us. Jesus Christ is the foundation. It's very clear if you just flip over to Acts 19.

We're not going to turn there this evening, but it's very clear to see that Jesus Christ Himself was the chief cornerstone of that beautiful church called the church in Ephesus. He was alive and well in that place and a beautiful thing began to happen. These verses lead me to my first point this evening as we're looking at foundation stones in the Anabaptist faith.

The first one, maybe you think we should even skip it, but we're not going to skip it. The first one is Jesus Christ Himself. This is the foundation stone of the Anabaptist faith.

Jesus Christ Himself. I don't know that I could testify that as I've looked around through these 26 years that Jesus Christ Himself is the foundation stone of the Anabaptist faith that I have seen and shared with. I

don't know that I could say that, but I know after I've been studying for these three months that Jesus Christ Himself was the chief cornerstone of the early Anabaptist faith.

No question about it. It's worthy of note. Most of the books that I read, and I read many, hardly mention this point.

Hardly mention this point, brothers and sisters, because you know we've got to make sure we get the doctrine of non-resistance in there and we've got to make sure that we get the doctrine of non-conformity in there and we've got to make sure that we get the doctrine of separation and church and state in there and we left out the doctrine of Himself! How can we expect to have the other if we do not have Him? So there's more focus on those doctrines. But I'm here to tell you this evening that this first point, Jesus Christ Himself is first and foremost. And all the others flow out of Him, brothers and sisters, to the early Anabaptists, salvation was Jesus Christ Himself.

Don't doubt it. You go back and read in the writings and you'll see that it's that way. Salvation was not a mental ascent to a doctrine.

Salvation was not just believing in something that Jesus did 2,000 years ago. Salvation was Jesus Christ Himself! And brothers and sisters, it has not changed. Jesus Christ is salvation and there is no salvation outside of Him! None! But we live in a day and an age when it's very easy to tack His name here and there and it's very easy to put a doctrine up there and ask people if they believe in it.

But it wasn't that way for the early Anabaptists. The early Anabaptist salvation was Jesus Christ Himself. And oh, what a transformation He made in their lives! The reformers' emphasis was more on believing in what Christ did.

But the Anabaptists, it was repentance toward God. I have sinned against the Holy God and faith and a believing into Jesus Christ. And if you want a good Bible study, you study those phrases in the Scriptures where it talks about Jesus when He says, Whosoever believeth in Me.

He's not talking about a mental ascent. That word means to believe into and lose my entire life in Him. How many of us have believed into Him? That's what it meant to the early Anabaptists.

It was a turning from my sin and my shame and a turning to Jesus Christ, a whole new life. And by the way, it wasn't just a whole new way of life. It was a whole new life.

What does that mean? A whole new life. It means more than imitation, brothers and sisters. Although it does mean that, but it means more than imitation.

It's more than just doing what Christ did. With the early Anabaptists, it was an impartation of His very life into their hearts. They believed in becoming partakers of the divine nature through repentance and faith into Jesus Christ.

That was the secret of the early Anabaptists. I said on Saturday evening, I believe it was Saturday evening. I lose track of where I'm at anymore.

But I believe it was on Saturday evening that I said that one of the greatest gifts that God gave to man was and is the 160-page biography, inspired biography of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is one of the greatest gifts that God ever gave to man. And we have it, don't we? Hallelujah! 160 pages of inspired

biography of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God incarnate. God in the flesh. The express image of the Father was walking around in human flesh.

And we have His life recorded in 160 pages of this book called the Bible. Hallelujah! What a gift God has given to us. Thank you, Lord Jesus.

Yes. The early Anabaptists treasured this biography. They held it above the epistles.

Not that they didn't believe the epistles were inspired, but they took the epistles and interpreted them in light of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. That's what they did. It may be that there was a bit of reaction because of the Reformers' over-emphasis on Pauline doctrine, but I'll tell you this, you can't go wrong following the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I mean, He is God in the flesh. He is the express image of the Father. Jesus said, if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father! Think about it, brothers and sisters! God, the eternal God, the eternal self-existent One, the Creator of the universe, has unveiled Himself through the Lord Jesus Christ who walked in human flesh.

And He's given us a biography of it that we can read it. Oh, God, change the way we read the biography of the Lord Jesus Christ. May God help us.

Early Anabaptists treasured this biography. I mentioned that the Reformers over-emphasized Pauline doctrine, but you know, as I was thinking about it this afternoon, if they would have looked a little bit deeper into the Apostle Paul's life, they would have found Christ living His life through Paul. Because Paul was one of the most beautiful examples of the life of Christ that we've ever seen in history.

That man walked with Jesus. And it's beautiful to behold. Turn with me now to John 14 as we just reflect a bit more on this first point.

Foundation stones in the Anabaptist faith. John 14 gives us a beautiful description of what we're speaking about here tonight. Jesus promised His disciples that it seems right that He would give them some encouragement at this time.

You know, it's only a few days now and He's going to go to the cross and their whole world is going to be shattered. But He tells them, I will not leave you comfortless. I'm not going to leave you alone.

I've been with you for these three and a half years. You've counted on Me. You've had questions.

I've had answers. You've looked for direction and I've given you example. I've been with you these three and a half years, but I want you to know I will not leave you comfortless.

Jesus said these words to His disciples in John 14 and verse 21, He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, He it is that loveth Me. You see, it's a matter of obedience, brothers and sisters. He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, He it is that loveth Me.

And He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father. And I will love Him and will manifest Myself to Him. Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words.

If a man love Me, he will keep My words. And My Father will love him. And We, We will come unto him and make Our abode with him.

He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings. And the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me. I'm not telling you something out of My own mind, Jesus said.

This is what the Father is telling Me to tell you. This was the experience of the early Anabaptists. Their heart was so set to obey the Lord Jesus and follow His example.

And with that kind of a willing heart, Jesus met them time and time and time again. And they walked with Him. Jesus said these words, Follow Me.

Follow Me, He said. Yes, He said, follow My teachings. But what did it mean when He said, follow Me? It means to treasure My words.

It means to emulate My example. It means to yield your life unto Me. And it means to hear My voice daily.

All of that is wrapped up in those little words that Jesus said several times. Follow Me. Follow Me.

It means to treasure His Word. It means to emulate His example. It means to yield to His life within Me.

And it means to hear His voice. And the Reformers thought those Anabaptists were crazy. Because they believed that they could live like Jesus.

And not only did they believe they could, they lived like Jesus. Not only did they live like Jesus, they believed it was an imperative that they live like Jesus. And the Reformers thought that they were crazy.

But they believed it. And so do I this evening. Christ living in me, in reality, is my only hope of glory.

Christ living in you, in reality, is your only hope of glory. Do you believe that tonight? Or would you fit in much better in a Protestant church somewhere where they just tell you to believe on what Jesus did back there 2,000 years ago and everything will be alright? No, Christ in you is the hope of glory, brothers and sisters. Don't doubt that.

And that's what the early Anabaptists believed. It still stands today. He is our only hope.

Even today, it is so easy for the natural man to rest in doctrines that are believed, to rest in sermons that I hear, to rest even in principles that I live because I have been taught them. But that's not enough. It must be Christ living His life in me.

That is Christianity. Far too often the doctrines and the practices are all we get. But it's not right.

We ministers make the mistake of not holding the people to this standard. And that standard is Christ living in me is the hope of glory. We make the mistake of emphasizing the things and holding the things on the people, and that's not going to reach.

If you think about the difference between a total dedication, that unreserved surrender we spoke about the other evening, compared to doing a few things that Christians ought to do, there is no comparison at all. It's easy to get up and go to church on Sunday morning. It's easy to get up and read your Bible.

It's an easy thing to say amen when you hear the sermon. It's even an easy thing to go out and knock on some doors and pass out some tracts. But it's not an easy thing to surrender your heart and your life to God on a continual basis, giving up everything that you might hear His voice and know Him personally.

So may God help us ministers to hold the people to this standard. Yes, I have no problem with having other standards. We need to have them in our churches.

But let us subjugate them to this standard, which by the way, it will get you to the other ones a whole lot quicker anyway. Those early Anabaptists, they had surrendered themselves to God and to the reality of Europe that they lived in in those days. And in a sense, we could say that the circumstances that they lived in forced them to abide in Christ.

They were forced to abide in Christ. Let's move on to number two. The second foundation stone that I would like to look at this evening is the stone of discipleship.

And one flows out of the other. I am a follower of Jesus Christ. I want to walk with Him.

I want to hear His voice. Therefore, I need help. I am a follower of Jesus Christ.

I want to walk in His ways. Therefore, I need help. And thus, discipleship.

I need a brotherhood. Not a brotherhood to boss me around. No, not at all.

But to help me to walk with Christ. A brotherhood that will bring accountability into my life. To help me to walk with Christ.

A brotherhood who will help me as my heart cries out and says, Amen? These things write unto you, little children, that ye sin not. That ye sin not. Discipleship.

I need a brotherhood to help me to overcome sin in my life. We must find ways to assemble ourselves together. Because I want to follow Christ with all my heart.

And I need brethren. And I need sisters to help me to do that. I need somebody to look me in the eyes of my heart and say, brother, do I find thee praying today? How are you? Oh, I'm fine.

No, I mean, really. How are you? Oh, what loving words. This is the basis of discipleship.

I want to walk with Christ. And I need help. We must find ways to assemble ourselves together.

We must break bread together and share in that common meal. The heart of a true disciple who wants to walk with Jesus Christ says, I will never make it without my brethren. I will never make it.

I need them. Brothers and sisters, solid church life grows up out of these desires. Solid church life.

And it changes the brotherhood drastically. No longer is the brotherhood just a circle of men who sit together and try to decide what to do for the next month. But all of a sudden, my brothers are men who come alongside of me with accountability and ask me how I'm really doing.

And this is the way it was with the early Anabaptists. They believed in discipleship on that level. They needed accountability.

They treasured it. They knew they wouldn't make it if they didn't have it. I thought about it this afternoon.

I thought about the early Methodist meetings. You know, they were very much along these lines, but there was one difference between the early Methodists and the early Anabaptists. And it's a significant one that we ought to grab ahold of.

Because the early Anabaptists were in the midst of much persecution and in desperation, they yielded themselves to one another. Help me walk with God! But with the early Methodists, they were not in the midst of persecution. Oh yes, they had a little trouble here and there.

Yeah, a couple of times they picked John Wesley up and threw him over a fence. And once they turned a bull loose, you know, in his meeting when he was preaching. They had a few things like that.

It happened here and there. But basically, the climate was pretty favorable. I mean, when he stood up to preach, 20,000 people gathered to listen.

That's very different than the early Anabaptists. Amen? But in the midst of those favorable conditions, there were the heart of a few young Methodists who desired to walk with Christ in the same way that we've been talking about. And their hearts said, let's be accountable.

And John Wesley designed the early Methodist society where a group of maybe ten get together once a week and ask each other hard questions. Questions like, have you been walking with God all this week? And if not, what happened? And what happened where? Did you witness to anybody this week? And if not, why not? Such questions! This is the way it was with the early Methodists. And by the way, they chose to do these things in good times.

And guess what? That was one powerful group of people. They shook England in their day in that favorable climb that they found themselves in, because they set themselves in the good times to walk with Christ and see His true life being manifested in their lives. And I don't know about you, but I think we ought to learn from them just like we learned from the Anabaptists.

Bless God, if there's somebody who's going to live like that, let's learn from them. Amen? Zion is bigger than just the Anabaptists. These early Anabaptists, they were baptized into this kind of discipleship.

I mean, those were the kind of vows they made when they were baptized. Yes, I am willing to submit myself to the discipleship of brothers who love me. They were baptized into this kind of discipleship.

It was beautiful. And they did prosper because of it. Yes, they prospered.

And so will we. Let's move on to number three. And these kind of flow right along, one right out of the other.

Number three. Foundation stone. Evangelism.

And I wrote this next to that word. To love in a God-like love. Evangelism! To love in a God-like love.

That's evangelism! And I wrestled and I struggled back and forth which words to put first. Because they are one and the same. They are one and the same.

Evangelism. Well, Brother Denny, we heard about evangelism last evening. Yes, I know you did.

But remember, we're doing a series here. And we don't want to miss a big foundation stone like this. Because brother, sister, this stone is our life! It's our life! Listen to the words of Menno Simons.

Such a beautiful heart, that dear man. He said, In the second place, we desire with ardent hearts, even at the cost of life and blood, that the holy gospel of Jesus Christ and His apostles, which only is the true doctrine and will remain so until Jesus Christ comes again upon the clouds, may be taught and preached throughout all the world. Amen, Menno Simons.

As the Lord Jesus Christ commanded His disciples that the last word to them while He was on the earth is the last thing that He said to them. Listen to his heart. This is my only joy and heart's desire to extend the Kingdom of God, to reveal the truth, to reprove sin, to teach righteousness, to feed hungry souls with the Word of the Lord, to lead the straying sheep into the right path and gain many souls to the Lord through His Spirit, His power and His grace.

Therefore, he goes on to say, we preach as much as is possible, both by day and by night, in houses and in fields, in forests and in wastes, hither and yon, at home or abroad, in prisons and in dungeons, in water and in fire, on scaffoldings and on the wheel, before lords and princes, through mouth and with pen, with possessions and with blood, with life and with death. We have done this these many years and we are not ashamed of the gospel, of the glory. That's how Menno Simons felt about evangelism.

Isn't that beautiful? It seems to me that it was the one thing that he did. What do you think? Last evening we heard an inspiring challenge about evangelism and I appreciated that very much, but I would like to go a bit deeper this evening, if we can, and maybe dig in a little bit into the doctrine of evangelism. Did you know that evangelism was a doctrine? It is a doctrine.

It is a doctrine just like non-resistance is a doctrine. It is a doctrine just like separation of church and state is a doctrine. Evangelism is a doctrine.

And you cannot separate the true life of Jesus Christ with evangelism. They go together. These dear brothers and sisters were baptized into evangelism.

Part of their vows, they were asked, as they were standing in the baptismal waters, or kneeling in them, or wherever it was, in a cave somewhere, they were asked, Are you willing to go and proclaim the good news to all the people who haven't heard? Yes, I'm willing. And they baptized them. And they got up off their knees and went and did it.

They went and did it. They were baptized into evangelism. They believe that that is the reason why we're here.

And brothers and sisters, that is the reason why we're here. There is no other reason. I agree with Brother Raymond's words last evening.

There is no other reason why we are here except to win a lost and dying world. Now, there are many other things, lesser things that fall underneath that, but all roads point back to that. All of them.

They were baptized into evangelism. This is why they got into so much trouble. Because they were baptized into evangelism.

Those first twelve men, their baptisms would not have been that big of a deal. The problem is that they went everywhere preaching and baptizing after that, and that's what got them in trouble. You see, Jesus said, go into all the world and preach the Gospel and baptize the people.

And that's where they got into trouble. Isn't it amazing what baptism does? Baptism sure makes a lot of trouble, doesn't it? You know, there are some mysterious things about baptism that we're going to find out someday. But it just seems like baptism gets a lot of people in trouble, doesn't it? That was the problem.

Those twelve, hey, if they would have just baptized each other there in the house of Felix Mons and went their own way, you know, that was kind of a secret baptism. That was kind of a secret baptism. If they would have just stopped right there and said, okay, now our consciences are clear and we've been rightly baptized, and now let's go, it probably wouldn't have been a lot of trouble.

But there was one more thing there. They were baptized unto evangelism. And that meant a whole lot of trouble for them.

You study church history, every attempt to return to primitive Christianity has evangelism at its roots. You will always find it. Study church history.

Every reviving of God's Spirit among God's people produces evangelism. It's just the natural outflow. It seems to me that when the body gets vitally connected to the head, which is Jesus Christ, evangelism happens.

Hello? Are you there? Can you hear me? Sila. Stop and think about that one. It seems to me that when the body gets vitally connected to the head, evangelism is the outflow.

Have you been baptized into evangelism? Maybe the price is too high. Maybe the cost is too much. Maybe the pain is more than what you're willing to bear.

This did not our Anabaptist forefathers. They did not hold back because of the pain. They did not hold back because of their wife.

They did not hold back because of their relatives. They did not hold back because of the things that they would suffer. They did not hold back because they would lose their money.

They didn't hold back because of those things. Have you been baptized into evangelism? You know, in my readings and studyings, I came upon a term that interested my attention. There was a group of people, quite a large group of people, by the way.

They called them Halfway Anabaptists. It was a term. They talked about them.

The Anabaptists and the Halfway Anabaptists. Do you know what the Halfway Anabaptists were? They were people who stayed in the Reformed Church. They knew those Anabaptists were right.

They had good talks with them at times on the side. They would slip them a little food from time to time and help if they could without getting in trouble. But they wouldn't get baptized.

And they called them Halfway Anabaptists. Maybe you're a Halfway Anabaptist tonight. They became secret followers because the cost was too high.

You know, I wonder what would happen. I wonder what for shaking would take place in this county if all the Halfway Anabaptists stood up. I wonder what would happen.

I wonder how many of them there are. I mean, I know there are lots of new ones. What about the old ones, you know, when the preacher sat them down and said, Yes, yes, we understand.

Yes, we're glad that you got born again. We also believe in being born again. But now let's not make too big of a deal about it.

Just settle down and be a help to us. And we need your kind in the congregation. Please don't leave.

And they settled down and they shut up. I wonder how many of those there are. I wonder what would happen in this county if all the Halfway Anabaptists stood up and said, Enough! At any cost, I'm going to follow the Lord.

I know what would happen and so do you. Hallelujah! What a blessing it would be! But who's going to start? I mean, where is that courageous man? Where is that courageous woman who would walk in the spirit of early Anabaptism and take their stand for the Lord? Where is he? Brethren, we are getting down into the deep roots of early Anabaptism now. Amen? I mean, this is deeper than separation of church and state.

These are the deeper things. This was the key to the 75-year Anabaptist revival that just kept on going and going and going and going. And in some places it lasted longer than that.

This was the key. This was it! Do we realize what we're hearing? Do we realize what we're hearing? I wonder what would happen if all of us Anabaptists started witnessing to all the tourists that come to Lancaster County. This county would lose millions and millions of dollars if we would do that.

I'll never forget. I think it was the second day that I was in Lancaster County. Brother Moses, maybe you remember.

We were living over in the basement of Brother Moses' house, I think still. And we, our little family, let's see, our little family back then was Ma and Pa and Rebecca and Daniel and Elizabeth. Samuel wasn't born yet.

And we thought we were going to go for a little walk. Isn't this nice, Lancaster County? We didn't know what we were in. Back then we were ignorant.

We thought we were going to go for a walk. Let's go for a little walk. And we started walking down Groffdale Avenue.

That's not too far from here, you know. And all of a sudden this tour bus pulled up and stopped. And all the people on the bus moved over to one side with their cameras and started taking pictures of us.

And I just looked at them and I thought, what is this? See, I didn't know then what I know now. And it's really not funny, is it? It's really not funny. And I've groaned over the tourism these many years that these powerful, these descendants of these powerful people, now here we sit, baking pies, making good food.

And listen, I travel, so I know. I know what they say about us. I travel a lot.

And the people tell me, and I've heard it many times on airplanes, where do you live? Oh, I live in Lancaster County. Man, I've never eaten food like that in my life. What a testimony.

I wonder what would happen if we witnessed to all the tourists that came to this county. And I mean witness to them like Raymond talked about last night, in the power of the Holy Ghost. Not just a smile evangelism, but an earnestness and an anointing upon our hearts and our words as we speak to the depths of their heart and look into their eyes and say, if you died today, do you know you'd go to heaven? I guarantee you, a couple of years of that, tourism would be gone.

It'd be gone. Or converted, one or the other. Evangelism or the lack of it is a key issue among Anabaptist people today.

The lack of evangelism is a key issue among Anabaptist people today. We have compromised. We have become the quiet in the land.

And we're satisfied to be that. In my studies, I read about the Russian migration of the Anabaptist people to Russia in the 1760s. Oh, I trembled when I read it.

I trembled! And I don't judge them. They had been chased for many, many years. They had suffered much persecution.

I can't even open my mouth about what they did in that sense. But yet, we must learn from history lest we repeat it. Amen? In their despair of trying to find a place where they could live, they made a deal with the government of Russia.

And the government of Russia said to them, Come! We hear that you're all good farmers and industrious people and honest and God-fearing. Come! We want you to help settle our land. We'll give you 162 acres of land each.

Ten years of tax-free living. We'll help you build your house when you come. Come into our land.

Oh, oh, and yes, by the way, just one thing, one other thing there in the contract. You will not convert the people of the land. Can you agree to that? Okay.

We will agree. No evangelism. No evangelism.

I'll give you this farm. Just keep your mouth shut. Okay.

Okay. I will. That was one of the darkest, most devastating promises ever made.

I'm not sure we're free of it yet. That promise has been duplicated over and over again. Sometimes openly.

Sometimes silently. Sometimes implied at a head shakes in agreement. I wonder if you could pull back the veil and drop into all those places where leaders sat down with government leaders and talked about this land or that land and coming there.

I wonder how many times that very compromise has been made. There's got to be a reason why the plain people have not evangelized this land where we live for over 250 years. There's got to be a reason.

And here we are. Still got the farm. Still got the house.

Still the quiet in the land. Anabaptist people known all over the world as hardworking, honest farmers who keep to themselves pretty much and bring posterity wherever they go. Did you know that? Even in the states, here in the United States, they talk about that.

Oh, there's Anabaptist people moving into our area. Property values are going to go up. Things are going to get better.

They're coming. Dear God, help us. Is that what we want to be known for? This is not what the early Anabaptists were known for.

They were the offscoring of the earth because they wouldn't shut their mouth. We are the quiet in the land because we don't open our mouth or very little. Very little.

We must repent. We must repent. We have sinned and our fathers have sinned.

A great sin. You know, I thought about it this afternoon. It's not the first time I ever thought about it, but I thought about it again this afternoon.

You know, it's a great, great sin to pick up a gun and shoot somebody. That's a great, great sin. God forbid that any of us would ever do that.

But my friend, is it any worse than damning the souls of men by neglect? Is it any worse than letting the neighbors go to hell around us while we plant our corn? Is there any difference in the Bible? There are sins of commission and there are sins of omission. Yes, it's wrong to pick up a gun and shoot somebody, but it's just as wrong to damn their souls by neglect. You may not believe that, but you should ponder that one for a while and let it sink down into your heart.

If we refuse to open our mouth and tell others what glorious things we have deposited within our own heart, we are guilty! And our fathers are guilty! We need to come to grips with it, brothers and sisters. Let us win the world. Amen? Let us take the hard places.

I thought about Brother Emanuel's teaching last Saturday about the Muslims. God may be giving us an opportunity to be Anabaptists again who are not afraid to die because we will open our mouth to the Muslims. You know, we can win those Muslim people like this American Christianity can never even try.

We have a chance to win the Muslim people. We have the opportunity. Oh, but there's just one thing missing yet.

We have to get over our fear of death. We are not like our forefathers. They were not afraid to die.

We are so afraid to die we run to every witch doctor and powwow doctor to try to keep ourselves this way and that way. But the early Anabaptists were not that way. You know who's going to win the Muslim people? People who are not afraid to die.

That's who's going to win them. The Anabaptists. The early Anabaptists' eye was single.

And when their eye became not single, darkness began to settle in over them. And it's still there today. Let's move on to the next foundation stone.

I think we have two more here. There are more than that, but it is enough for us. And all these flow one from the other.

There is the foundation stone. The early Anabaptists believed in two kingdoms. We mentioned that a little bit the other evening.

But these flow one out of the other. Anabaptists clearly saw that there are two kingdoms. We mentioned it the last time that they could see it so clearly because the kingdoms were in conflict.

And the reason why the kingdoms were in conflict was because of evangelism. You don't see the kingdoms in conflict until you start opening up your mouth. As soon as you do, Satan and his kingdom will rear up his ugly head and start spitting at you.

The Anabaptists were willing to open up their mouths and speak about the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and immediately they saw two kingdoms in conflict. It wasn't hard for them to develop a theology of two kingdoms. Amen? They didn't sit down in a classroom and look a few verses up and say, okay, that's right.

Yeah, that's right. And this is this kingdom and this is this one. Alright, brother.

Thank you. This is part of this kingdom and this is part of this kingdom. They didn't go through exercises like that.

That other kingdom reared itself up in their face. I mean, like a spitting cobra ready to bite. There wasn't no need for a lot of meditation about which kingdom was which.

Amen? It's a little hard to discern it sometimes in America, isn't it? It's a pretty favorable climb here. They believed that the kingdom of God was made up of true, separated, dedicated Christians. Those who had surrendered everything to God.

And they believed in the kingdom of this world where Satan's influence was seen and felt on every side. They saw that the Reformers, with their union of church and state, was on the other side of the kingdom. They saw that very clearly.

It may be at first that they wondered in the first debates that they had when they were all still sitting together around the table and opening up their Bibles and looking. But as soon as those brethren, those twelve brethren, got up off of their knees after they were baptized, dedicating themselves to God and whatever God would have them to do, as soon as they went out of that house and started preaching the Gospel and baptizing believers, they found out where the other kingdom was. The lines got drawn real fast.

This became very clear as they went against the status quo and began baptizing converts. All hell broke loose in that other kingdom. And thousands of Anabaptists died in the midst of it.

Christ clearly defined these two kingdoms. But it's important to note how fast the lines are drawn when we get busy about God's business. Political involvement is in that other kingdom.

Amen? And I don't believe in political involvement. I think it's a waste of God's time. But brothers and sisters, it's not enough for us to sit here this evening and say that I don't believe in political involvement if I'm not going to get busy in God's kingdom.

We believe in two kingdoms around here. You stay out of the one because you're busy in the other. But I'm afraid we've lost sight of kingdom building.

And so here we sit in our nice houses with our farms building our own little kingdoms here upon this earth while we say we don't believe in political involvement. We'll pray for you. And amen, we don't believe in political involvement.

But all the while, we're spending all of our time and our energy and our finances on our own little kingdoms. How'd that happen? And God is saying, build My kingdom. Amen? We don't believe in going to war.

That's part of that other kingdom. Amen. Rightly so.

We don't go to war. But what about the real war? Do we get involved in that one? Or again, do we sit here in our nice houses with our big businesses and all the time freedom that we have like the rest of the world never knows? Do we sit here with all of that and say, I don't believe in going to war. I'm going to stay home and build my little kingdom.

That's not right, brethren. Somebody ought to find fault with that. Some government official ought to find fault with that.

Amen. I don't believe in going to this war. But bless God, I see another fight going on over here.

And I'm ready to get in it. Engage the enemy. I'm ready to give my life for this one over here.

Should we refuse to give our life in this one over here and not be willing to give our life in this one over here? Something doesn't make sense, brothers and sisters. The Anabaptists believed in two kingdoms and the lines were real clearly drawn. This separation of kingdoms was more than politics and the military.

That other kingdom also brought with it a whole world system, a whole satanic system of pride and pomp and lust and greed, a world of vanity and entertainment. And these militant Anabaptists separated themselves from this present evil world in all of those ways also. They did that willingly.

I thought about it as I was pondering that point. It wasn't hard for them to separate from the worldly world. That world was breaking their bones, pulling out their fingernails, mocking them while they burned.

It wasn't hard for them to say I want nothing to do with that world and all of its pleasures and all of its entertainments. Amen? But it doesn't quite look the same for us, does it? No, for them the world was a battleground where people die. But for us, the world is more like a playground where you can go and play.

I mean, it's just great. Oh, resort America, what a nice place to live. And we play in the world.

And we don't mind playing alongside the world as the world plays in the world. That gets pretty close to home, doesn't it? Huh? That gets pretty close to home. Got it! That gets pretty close to home, doesn't it? We play in the world and we don't mind playing right alongside of the world.

No! That's not the way it was in early Anabaptism, brother, sister! What are we doing? Oh, it's vacation time! Let's go ride the go-karts with the rest of the world! Dear Lord, where are we going? What are we doing? The world is a playground, not a battlefield. If it were a battlefield, you couldn't go out there and do that. I guarantee it.

You couldn't do it. But it's a playground. Oh, it's okay.

Oh, we don't do it every week. We just do it when we go on vacation. These militant Anabaptists separated themselves from this present evil world.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, they wanted no part of any of it. Last foundation stone. And we've mentioned this one already, but it's so part of their foundation that we must look at it again tonight.

They believed in a suffering brotherhood. Again, these points flow one out of the other, don't they? When we see those two worlds and we take our stand in this kingdom instead of this kingdom and we're not afraid to open up our mouth and preach the Gospel to a world that's on their way to hell, suffering is going to come our way. Suffering will come.

Suffering was a normal part of a disciple's life to the early Anabaptists. It was normal. They expected it.

It's going to happen. I'll probably go to jail. I'm going to starve in there.

I won't get any food. It'll just be bread and water. And on and on and on we could go.

Poverty, cruel mockings, loss of my home, being destitute of food, cold and homeless, wandering in the forest, sitting in a prison cell where it's cold and wet and rat infested, facing torture, accusation, humiliations and death. This was normal for the early Anabaptists. And it's amazing to me, but it's only the power and grace of God that could do this.

But those men stood in this straight and narrow way and preached the Gospel to the multitudes of people from one village to the next and those people knew what is going to happen to those Anabaptists for doing what they're doing. And still they came and said, I want to be baptized also. Isn't that amazing? That was the power of God, brothers and sisters.

I mean, that makes healing a man that cannot see look like a piece of cake. To convince a worldly man to walk away from all of his world and into this world of suffering, that is a miracle of God's grace. But the conviction of the Holy Ghost was strong upon the people in those days because the men and women who opened their mouth for Jesus Christ were surrendered in those days in ways that we can't even begin to imagine.

And that surrender brought anointing like we hardly ever know. And their words pierced like a sword into the hearts of the people who heard them. And they came forward to be baptized one after another after another.

And you know, in that setting, they didn't need to have an instruction class to see who was sincere and who wasn't. Amen? They didn't need to have an instruction class. Well, what do you think about Him? Well, I'm not sure.

Let's give Him a couple more weeks and see how things shake out. No. You didn't have to have an instruction class in those days.

And I'm not against having an instruction class, by the way. Things have changed. But they didn't need an instruction class in those days.

If you were willing to be baptized in light of that kind of life that is going to come your way, you were a disciple of Jesus Christ and they took you to the water without any other questions asked. Oh, Lord. I kind of long for those days, you know.

They are coming. I hope you know that. They are coming.

Those days are coming again. I hope we'll be ready when they come. In all this that they suffered, they did not fight back.

In all this, they loved their enemies. In all this, they blessed those who persecuted them. This is suffering love.

Suffering love. Why? For the sake of the souls. They suffered for the sake of the souls.

And oh, the testimonies are beautiful to read and hear what happened so many times when that man who held that big axe in his hand. And it was an axe with a blade on it about like this. He held that axe in his hand and the Anabaptist laid himself down on the ground and looked up into the eyes of the man who was going to cut his head off with a smile of joy in his face.

And he looked into his heart and said, I love you. I pray for you. God bless you, dear friend.

And he brought that axe down on his head, his neck, and cut his head off. But something happened inside of that man's heart. He could not get away from that look of love that flowed out of the heart of that Anabaptist who died for his faith.

Love conquered! All over Europe, suffering love conquered all over Europe. For love they could not help but tell the people about Christ. And for love of the same souls, they would not fight back.

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